

She undergoes a mandatory physical every year and to date there is nothing seriously wrong with her. She does notice more hair in the shower drain, but the hairbrush isn't carrying away large clumps, and the pay is decent. What with the recession and wanting nothing to do with welfare — it's not such a bad job.

What else is there?

— Thomas Gianakopoulos

Los Angeles CA

EASTER SUNDAY: 1994

and we spent it with my  
mom and my sister and her  
husband and her little boy;

my brother in law worked on  
the lawnmower while i read  
the chicago paper to see if  
i could find a job there;

my lady had just been accepted  
into school there and i cldnt

find a goddamn thing and kevin  
cldnt figure out what was  
wrong with the mower so he  
loaded it up and drove it into  
town to get it looked at and

my mom asked if we wanted to  
scatter my dads ashes before  
or after we had strawberry  
pie for dessert she cried  
while she scattered the ashes;

they looked like white chips  
of gravel, burned hard and  
angry by the fire from the oven

i had no idea that they would  
look like that; i had images  
of sooty fireplace ashes,  
something like dust that  
would just float away when  
it hit the air, but these  
ashes were SOLID, they hit



the ground in chunks and sank  
in — reminding me of how heavy  
the box had been when the  
undertaker had first handed  
it to me in evansville, indiana.

CHICAGO, APRIL 1994

chicago is nothing like  
new orleans; i thought  
that perhaps it might be.

we're driving around,  
looking for a park that  
some kid at the art  
institute told us about;  
said that the rent was  
cheap and that it was  
safe too. got lost,

i guess, since we ended  
up in cabrini green. all  
black skins out in the  
street, holding up fifty-  
five gallon drums one of  
them with fire coming out  
the top, thats what my  
lady said, i didnt see it

too busy watching the street  
and the kids darting in and  
out of traffic; all of them  
wearing clothes that did  
not fit; once white t-shirts  
hanging around battered knees.

i figure its too damn bad for  
all those kids; tooling around  
on flat tires and warped rims;  
but this place isnt a goddamn  
thing like new orleans. i  
dont see jesus anywhere and  
all i want to do is get out.

SMITTY, 2

i figure that esther will  
have some trouble with it  
later on; for awhile im  
not able to figure out  
the thinking of it all;